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NOTES.

William Blackmore, Esq., the munificent founder of the "Blackmore Museum," in his native town of Salisbury, England, (which we are authorized by Mr. Squier in saying is the finest illustration of that part of "prehistoric" archæology denominated the "Stone-age" in the world) is anxious to obtain all possible information regarding the range of the buffalo at the time of the settlement of this country. Mr. Blackmore purchased from Dr. Davis his portion of the antiquities of the west which formed the basis of the first volume of the "Smithsonian Contributions." Any information on the points indicated above, if sent to the care of Mr. E. G. Squier, 135 East 35th St., New York, or communicated to this magazine, will be highly appreciated.

Prof. Albert N. Prentiss of Cornell University has taken the first Walker prize offered by the Boston Society of Natural History. The subject was "The Mode of Natural Distribution of Plants over the Surface of the Earth."

The veteran Herpetologist and Ichthyologist of America, Dr. John E. Holbrook of Charleston, S. C., died at Norfolk of apoplexy on Sept. 8th, aged seventy-six years, eight months. Dr. Holbrook's principal publications were the *Herpetology of North America*, in four quarto volumes containing descriptions and colored figures of all the North American Reptiles known at the time, and the *Ichthyology of South Carolina* in similar style. The former work went through two editions and is to this day the basis of our knowledge of the reptiles of this country. Of the latter work only one volume was published, as the war prevented its completion by the state of South Carolina, though we have certain knowledge that the drawings and descriptions of the concluding volume were in an advanced state, if not even ready for the press at the breaking out of the war.

Mr. S. I. Smith, Assistant in the Sheffield Scientific School, has been appointed State Entomologist of Connecticut.

Mr. J. A. McNiel proposes to make another expedition (the fourth) to the Pacific Coast of Central America. He will leave New York about the first of December and solicits orders for specimens in all departments. His address is Binghamton, N. Y.

It will be remembered that last year Dr. William Stimpson and others explored the bottom of Lake Michigan at great depths with the dredge, and with the most gratifying success. We learn that Mr. S. I. Smith, zoological assistant of the Sheffield Scientific School has been dredging during the past summer in the deepest parts of Lake Superior.

Professor Henry recently, in a few remarks before the California Academy of Sciences, presented the results of the meterological observations which have been made and collected by the Smithsonian Institution. The paper will soon be published. The rainfall of the United States comes from three different quarters, the Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific. Perhaps the largest comes from the Gulf of Mexico, the bottom, as we term it, of the trade wind. Although nothing appears more irregular than the rains in the Eastern States, a long series of observations establishes the fact that they are very regular.

The speaker explained briefly the law controlling the movement and precipitation of vapors, and exhibited several charts, showing on what months the maximum and minimum of rainfall were observed to occur in different localities and upon different areas.

He also displayed a number of the latest compiled charts, showing by graduated colors the comparative amount of the rainfall in various localities. He explained the fact of the rainfall being wholly absent in California in summer.

In Florida the rainfall was light in winter and heavy in summer, owing to the fact that in winter the trade wind which brought the rain took its course more to the southward. The temperature of Sitka was about seventeen degrees warmer than it would otherwise be from the influence of the summer trade winds.

In connection with the present condition of science, Professor Henry enlarged on the reasons why wealthy men should give liberally to the cause. Large donations had been made to the cause of education, while science was nearly neglected. This should not be. Education is merely the diffusion of knowledge already gained. The Chinese are highly educated, but they lack science, and are therefore non-progressive. Science seeks constantly to add something to the general fund.

No civilization is possible without a concentration of power. The ancients had their power in slaves. The pyramids were built by slave labor. Athens had four hundred thousand slaves and twenty thousand masters. The civilization of those days was supported by the brute forces of man. The civilization of to-day is supported by the brute forces of nature. The latent force of the coal puts the life of a thousand horses into an engine. One ton of our best anthracite coal burned in one of our best engines, is estimated as being equal to two years of labor of an able bodied slave, working ten hours a day; and counting thirty years for his life, fifteen tons of coal would be equal to the life of an able-bodied slave.

It is in the further utilization of these brute forces of nature that the fortunes of our wealthy men lie. When men of intelligence understand that their fortunes depend on the advancement of science, they will be induced to give a small portion of their wealth to this end. Science seeks to enlarge knowledge. No name has gained higher honor than that of James Smithson, for the donation on which the Smithsonian Institution was founded. The only man who has followed his example is Professor Bache of the Coast Survey.

Scientific men should endeavor to impress on the wealthy that their interest lies in the advancement of science as well as the diffusion of knowledge already gained.

Professor Henry referred to his recent visit to Europe and to the rapid strides which science was making in England, and attributed it to the advantages which are given to those men who are pioneers in original discoveries.

A great degree of success has attended the researches carried on by Prof. Baird, the U. S. Commissioner of Fisheries, at Wood's Hole, Mass., during the past season from June till October. He has called to his aid several naturalists, and by their united exertions much light has been thrown upon the distribution of the fishes and the invertebrate animals which form their food. The fishes have been collected in large numbers, and will be worked up by Prof. Gill. Over two hundred photographs of fishes from life have been taken, including sharks and rays in different stages of development, affording rich material for illustration. Dredging parties have gone out in every direction within a radius of thirty or forty miles, and an immense amount of material, including many new forms and others not before known to exist on this side of the Atlantic, has been accumulated. Among the more interesting discoveries are two Pteropods (*Cavolina tridentata* and *Clio aciculus*) not previously known upon our coast. The invertebrates will form the subject of an elaborate report with numerous plates, by Prof. Verrill and Mr. S. I. Smith. Among the fishes, sixteen species, new to the state, have been obtained and much information collected relative to the nature of the food and rates of growth of the species used as food. We hope in subsequent numbers of this journal to give farther information as to the scientific results of the commission.

Among the visitors to Wood's Hole taking part more or less in the exploration of the commission were Prof. A. E. Verrill, Prof. D. C. Eaton, Prof. W. D. Whitney, Mr. S. I. Smith, Prof. W. H. Brewer, Prof. Todd, and Mr. Thatcher of New Haven; Prof. A. Hyatt and Col. Theo. Lyman of Boston; Prof. L. Agassiz, Dr. Farlow and Mr. Whitney of Cambridge; Dr. A. S. Packard of Salem, Mr. J. Gwyn Jeffreys of London; Prof. Gill, Dr. Palmer, and Mr. Rockwell of Washington, etc.

We learn from the "Academy" that the British Government has expressed its willingness to support Dr. Carpenter's scheme of prosecuting deep sea explorations throughout the Atlantic, Indian, Southern and Pacific Oceans.

Under the title of "An Early Hero of the Pacific" "The Overland Monthly" for August has a very readable account of the life of DAVID DOUGLAS, the botanist, during the ten years, 1824–34, he passed on the Pacific coast.

A new edition, the third, of "Griffith and Henfrey's Micrographic Dictionary" has just commenced passing through the press. John Van Voorst publishes it at No. 1 Paternoster Row, London, at 2s. 6d. per part.—R. H. W.

The French "Cosmos," one of our most valued exchanges before the late war, has reappeared under the title of "La France Scientifique." The first number appeared Sept. 10th. Victor Meunier is the editor.

THE CHICAGO ACADEMY OF SCIENCES.

We take advantage of the delay in the publication of this number of the Naturalist, occasioned by our "Association Number" to place on record the great loss which science has met with in the destruction of the building of the Chicago Academy of Sciences with all its valuable collections and library, during the great fire on the 8th and 9th of October. We had visited the Academy in August and had been fully impressed with the value of its splendid collections, and while watching the telegraphic reports of the fire had hoped that these would at least be spared the fate that once before had befallen the Academy, but the receipt of letters, of which we give abstracts below, showed that our hopes were doomed to disappointment.

Chicago, Oct. 10, 1871.

"Among the other buildings involved, was the Chicago Academy of Sciences. It was considered fire-proof; but, in the fiery furnace, its iron shutters warped like pasteboard, and let in the devouring element, and a precious morsel it lapped up. There were the greater portion of the invertebrata collected by numerous explorers and in distant oceans, originally deposited in the Smithsonian Institution, but transferred here for especial study and description by Dr. Stimpson; the collection of mammals and birds made by Dr. Vaille, which cost him years of labor and travel; two skeletons of the mastodon; the collections of Kennicott in the Arctic region; of Stimpson on the Florida reefs and the Gulf Coast; the Cooper collection of shells, purchased by George Walker; an interesting series of implements in pottery and lava—the work of a prehistoric race—exhumed at San Jose, Mexico, presented by J. Y. Scammon; a large collection of minerals, rich in crystalline forms, which was secured through the exertions of Mr. E. S. Chesboro; an extensive suite of the coals and iron ores of the Northwest, and other objects of natural history. The Academy had become the resort for Scientific men desirous of studying not only the natural history of the Northwest, but of the whole country. Dr. Stimpson's MSS. relating to the invertebrates collected on the Japan Expedition, illustrated by numerous drawings — the labor of years, and ready for publication—were also consumed. But a short time ago Mr. J. Gwyn Jeffreys spent several days in examining our collections in reference to deep sea dredgings. But all are gone. The patrons through whose munificence the Academy was built up have shared in the general calamity. Many of the specimens cannot be replaced; but when the Academy shall arise like a Phœnix from its ashes is a matter of doubt. The present is not a time for consultation while the embers are yet alive, and while the smoke is yet ascending."—J. W. Foster.

Chicago, Oct. 12.

"Please stop the sale of the books and papers in the agency. We have not a copy left of any of them. The Academy building and everything in it was utterly destroyed —not a scrap of paper or a specimen saved. My own books, collections, MSS. and drawings—twenty years' work all gone!"—Wm. Stimpson.

At a meeting of the Essex Institute held Oct. 16th, the president, Dr. Wheatland, read short sketches of the Chicago Historical Society and Chicago Academy of Sciences. From the latter we abstract the following:—In 1856 the formation of a society for the promotion of the Natural Sciences was proposed, and in the following year the Chicago Academy of Natural Sciences was organized. A room was taken and a museum commenced, but owing to the financial crash that came upon the country, very little was done until the year 1859, when it was organized as a corporation under the title of the Chicago Academy of Sciences. In 1862 the lamented Kennicott returned from his three years' exploration in the Arctic regions, richly laden with specimens, a part of which were to become the property of the Academy. In the winter of 1863-4 advantage was taken of Prof. Agassiz' visit to Chicago to gain his opinion of the value of the collections secured by Mr. Kennicott. His endorsement of Mr. Kennicott's work, and his urging the importance of the formation of a great museum in the Northwest was so strong an incentive that money was at once secured (a large sum being given at an impromptu meeting, afterwards greatly increased by the efforts of Mr. Scammon) and the funds placed in the hands of trustees for the formation of a Museum of which Mr. Kennicott was appointed Director. In 1863 Mr. Kennicott, in order to add to the materials of the museum, accepted the appointment on the Russian American Telegraph Survey. From this ill-fated expedition he never returned. At this time the charge of the museum was given to Dr. Stimpson. On June 7, 1866, a large part of the collection of over forty thousand specimens, and all the plates for the first part of the "Transactions" were destroyed by fire. Soon afterwards the text of the same volume while in the hands of the printer met the same fate. The Academy however started forward with renewed vigor, and erected what in any ordinary fire would have been a fire proof building. Its collections and library were rapidly increased, until, at the date of the present calamity it had within its walls one of the, in many respects, most valuable collections in the country, including the larger part of the crustacea and other invertebrates belonging to the Government and Smithsonian collections, and the crustaceans dredged by Pourtales, which had been sent to the Academy for Dr. Stimpson to describe. The State collection of insects made by the late Mr. Walsh, had also been deposited at the Academy.

The Academy had published its first volume of "Transactions" and forty-eight pages of its "Proceedings." The second volume of "Transactions" was in a forward condition, and many pages stereotyped and several plates printed and stored at the Academy.

After remarks on the great loss which science had met, and a description of the character of the collections destroyed, Mr. F. W. Putnam, vice president of natural history, offered the following Resolutions, which were seconded with remarks by Drs. Bolles and Morse, the president and others, and unanimously passed.

Resolved. That the Essex Institute tenders its sympathy to its sister society, the CHICAGO ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, in her second trial by fire, in which she has lost not only her buildings, but all her specimens, books and publications.

Resolved. That the Institute hereby promises to furnish such of its publications as the Chicago Academy of Sciences may desire, and to render such other assistance as possible in the efforts of the Academy to arise for a second time from the ashes.

May we not, as editors of the NATURALIST, make a special appeal, at this hour of generous free offerings to the suffering people of Chicago, and ask for aid and sympathy for the Academy of Sciences that was doing so much for the cause of education in the great Northwest. Can we not hope, even though so much is yet to be done for the homeless of the great city, and the other towns that have been simultaneously devastated by fire, that the friends of science will aid all they can in giving encouragement to the members of the Academy in this severe trial?